

SELFIDGE FIELD, BUILDING No. 129
(Bakery)
(General Purpose Aircraft Shop-Battery Shop)
Wilbur Wright Boulevard at Ash Street
Mt. Clemens vicinity
Macomb County
Michigan

HAER No. MI-116-D

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PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN ENGINEERING RECORD
National Park Service
Great Lakes Systems Office
Department of the Interior
1709 Jackson Street
Omaha, NE 68102-2571

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SELFRIDGE FIELD,
BUILDING #129 (BAKERY)
(General Purpose Aircraft Shop/Battery Shop)

HAER No. MI-116-D

Location:

North of Wilbur Wright Boulevard west of Birch Street
Selfridge Air National Guard Base

U.S.G.S. Mount Clemens East Quadrangle, Universal Transverse
Mercator Coordinates: 17.350740.4718830

Significance:

This building is typical of the functional Cantonment district structures, the first permanent base structures designed to complement the Georgian Revival architecture of the noncommissioned and commissioned officer's housing district, and served as the base bakery through the 1960s.

History:

This Base Bakery building was erected in 1933 from plans of the Construction Division of the Office of the Quartermaster General. The building received minor repairs to the roof, interior heating system and electrical system in 1963-1964 according to plans by Pircher and Jarratt, Architects of Ferndale, Michigan, completed for the Air Force Air Defense Command Civil Engineering. Today the building serves as general purpose aircraft support and battery shop as well as a recreational lounge for base personnel.

This building represents the functional components of the permanent base construction initiated during the late 1920s and early 1930s. The officers' housing neighborhood, the Cantonment District, extended the north and east from the building site, and was designed to complement the residential Georgian Revival style.

The Cantonment district is unified by its historical frame of reference, with all buildings being built within a 7 year period between 1927 and 1934. These buildings replaced the frame, temporary buildings that were the hallmark of the original Selfridge Field, dating to ca. 1917 to 1918. Stylistically, all are substantial architect-designed buildings executed in a brick medium. All but the most functional structures display strong references to the Georgian Revival style in massing and in elements such as arched windows, quoins, and classical pediments.

This complex of buildings was built at the core of the original Selfridge Field and today is still the most distinctive cluster of

architecture on base. The brick structures present today form a consistent entity of Georgian Revival architecture in the residential housing and duplexes (#220s to #250s series), and the administrative and support facilities (#300 to #350 and #3 to #140 series). It includes hangars, officers housing, barracks, and specialized buildings such as a squadron operations/control tower, the fire station, a parachute house and other maintenance and support facilities.

Buildings in the Cantonment area played a significant part in Selfridge's role as a training base during the war. The base expanded outward spatially and the number of base structures mushroomed rapidly during the war. Although most of the new buildings were constructed in the base's newly acquired zones, a number were erected in proximity to the Cantonment core. Still, the Cantonment District provided a structural, functional, and stylistic anchor for the base.

The architectural and functional "core" of Selfridge, the original base, constructed prior to World War II, presents a unique resource in Michigan. Few airfields that were exclusively military in genesis were built in the state and Selfridge is the oldest and best preserved example of its type. The concentration of brick structures built in the cantonment area of the base from the mid-1920s into the early 1930s form a cohesive assemblage.

Description:

This building is basically a rectangular plan, 66 feet 4 inch by 30 feet 4 inch, structure although a boiler room occupies an 8 foot 8 inch by 40 foot 4 inch unit extending from the west elevation. The building rests on a concrete foundation water table, is sheathed in standard bond brick. The building is distinguished by its parapeted gables with masonry coping that rests on denticulated brick courses. Denticulated courses are also employed below the masonry chimney cap. The building's four bay principal (east) elevation is symmetrical, defined by two large steel frame windows with masonry sills that are flanked by steel corner entry doors shielded by bracketed porch hoods. The southern entry has been enlarged into a double door. The ridge of the gable is broken by a large linear copper vent hood, a low shed roofed louvered dormer occurs on the west roof plane, and triangular louvered vents occur within the gabled wall apexes.

The north elevation consists of four bays defined by steel windows above a pair of small vents in the water table and beneath a vented louver in the gable. The parapeted gable is distinguished by dog tooth bond beneath the masonry coping. The west elevation presents three functional bays in the form of a steel pedestrian entry door, a steel sash window and a bricked in void formerly occupied by a second entry door near the northwest corner. A square standard bond stack breaks the roof line as does a louvered low pitch gable dormer. The south elevation consists of a large, centrally positioned steel frame window beneath a louvered gable vent. The roof is shielded by asphalt shingle.

The original floor plan revealed that the majority of the interior space was occupied by the bakery floor with its ovens, tables, troughs, bakery outfit and refrigerator. The smaller store room and Proof Room were located along the north wall while the Issue Room, Baker's Room and Toilet occupied the south end of the building and the Boiler Room Firing Space and Fuel Room occupied the eastern bays of the building. The interior room divisions were faced in tile and terra cotta floors were used throughout. Today the interior plan consists a northern rank of three rooms composed of an entry vestibule in the northeast corner, flanked by a weight room and a latrine in the northwest corner. The building's central interior space, separated from the north rank of rooms by a masonry and tile wall, is itself partitioned into a battery charging room to the north and what is currently called the "Bar'n," an informal recreation area with a drop ceiling, paneling and a back bar that occupies most of the center of the building. The southern bay of the building, separated from the Bar'n by a masonry and tile wall, is the Halon Servicing Room, used to support flight operations.

Sources:

Anonymous, Brief History of Selfridge Air Force Base, 1917-1960, unpublished ms., Air Force Historical Research Agency, Maxwell Air Force Base, Alabama, 1960.

Mihalak, Joseph, Evolution of Family Housing Selfridge Air National Guard Base Mount Clemens, Michigan, Historical Office, U.S. Army Tank-Automotive Command, 20, January, 1988.

Nigro, Louis, Selfridge Air National Guard Base, An Unofficial History, unpublished ms., Public Information Office, Selfridge ANG Base, Michigan, 1977.

Copy of construction drawing, dated November 10, 1932, Construction Division Office of the Quartermaster General, in possession of Selfridge Base Museum, Mt. Clemens, Michigan. Plans, Elevations, Details, Plan No. 635-100.

Interview, Colonel Robert Stone (Ret.), Curator, Selfridge Base Museum, October 13, 1995.

Interview, Eric Reeve, Selfridge Environmental Management, October 12, 1995.

Historian:

William E. Rutter
Midwest Environmental Consultants, Inc.
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